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Editorial Introduction

This is the seventh issue of *Regional Development Studies (RDS)*, UNCRD's annual journal designed to act as a forum for presenting and discussing a wide range of topics loosely embraced by the term "Regional Development". The articles included in this volume are fewer than usual due to the fact that several of them extend beyond the recommended length for *RDS* articles. The additional pages enable the authors to deal more thoroughly with their subjects and to present more exhaustive findings.

The seven articles published herein focus on developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and, in keeping with the journal's general objective, focus on widely differing aspects of regional development under the unifying theme of planning. Being conveniently divided along geographical lines, the articles are arranged as follows: the opening articles, from widely contrasting nations in LAC, focus on new planning strategies for economic development/revitalization, firstly, in Brazil and, secondly, in the Bahamas.

Allen J. Scott, in his article "Industrial Revitalization in the ABC Municipalities, São Paulo: Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Recommendations for a New Economy and New Regionalism," conducts a careful analysis of a region situated in the southeastern part of the São Paulo metropolitan area which formerly constituted "...the principal core of the Brazilian mass-production system". After 1980, however, the region's economy was beset by crisis resulting from a number of factors clearly delineated by the author. Having established empirical and theoretical bases concerning the "...problem of regional economic development and the possibilities for effective policy-making," he advances a set of new policy guidelines for a strategy to revitalize the region's economy but also stresses the importance of avoiding "...rigid formulas and standardized prescriptions" in devising such a strategy. He advocates the creation of a "...flexible learning economy rich in dynamic competitive advantages, characterized by steadily rising skills and wages, and capable of attaining global standards of product quality". In his concluding comments, he notes that any action based on the proposed guidelines for the new economic strategy would also entail "...significant readjustments in local social organization..." calling for the "...widest possible consultation". Such a call, he observes, is entirely consistent with the future scenario, as laid out by the region's Deliberative Council in 1999.

The second article from LAC focuses on a country which provides a startling contrast to Brazil, the region's dominant power. Nikolaos Karagiannis, in "Creating Industrial Production in the Bahamas: The Challenge of the Developmental State Approach" presents a well-argued study of the island nation which strongly questions the conventional policy prescriptions for the country's economic development. Instead of looking to tourism development and financial services as the continuing mainstays of the islands' future prosperity, Karagiannis proposes interesting alternatives based on "...the developmental state approach on industrial development". One component of his alternative suggestions involves building on the Japanese experience after the Second World War in employing a supply-side strategy for national economic development — although he is careful to pursue a distinctively

“Bahamian” approach to the problems of the Bahamian economy. While allowing that, hitherto, the country’s traditional sectors of tourism and financial services have enabled the Bahamian population to achieve a relatively high standard of living, the author argues that there is no steady economic growth and that the economy is characterized by a lack of stability. He contends that far from being a resource-poor country, the Bahamas is characterized by “...underutilization of existing resources, and...” there “...has never been a strategy or a consistent set of policies for their use and exploitation in the long-term interest of Bahamians”. His advocacy of an expansion of industrial production and employment in the islands’ economy may come as a surprise to some but in proposing a developmental state strategy, focused on the food industry, he argues persuasively that such a strategy would “...tend to correct the recurrent Bahamian tendency towards external disequilibrium and high dependency on foreign economic activity”. In a final section, he observes that although such a strategy would require a high quality intervention from the Bahamian government, there would be little need for layers of bureaucratic machinery and procedures since the approach is entrepreneurial.

The third and fourth articles in this volume of *RDS* are comprised of contributions from Africa, both of which focus on local-level action towards social development. Although the backgrounds against which each article is written differ considerably, common threads can be determined running through both which highlight the increasingly important roles that social action and community organization must play in achieving both social justice and sustainable development.

The first of these African articles is from Kenya, by Fredrick O. Wanyama, and is entitled “Grass-roots Organizations for Sustainable Development: The Case of Community-based Organizations in Western Kenya”. The author notes the widespread failure of development models pursued across many third world countries into the 1980s and charts the rise of local-level organizations resulting from the adoption of the “bottom-up” paradigm of development. In the pursuit of sustainable development, it was assumed that such organizations would be best placed to make optimum use of local resources, organize the poor, and initiate development activities. As a result of his investigations into community-based organizations (CBOs) in southwestern Kenya, the author shows that these organizations have made a real contribution in starting sustainable socioeconomic activities. In a useful section, he examines five distinct types of CBOs and, with case study examples, documents their origins and contribution to improving people’s living conditions at the grass-roots level.

In contrast to Kenya, which has largely resolved its landownership problems stemming from the colonial era, the second article from Africa focuses on Zimbabwe, a country still struggling to deal with unresolved problems of landownership directly resulting from the unbalanced situation prevailing at the time of the country’s independence in 1980. In their highly topical article “Landlessness and Farm Invasions in Zimbabwe: Lessons for Social Workers Practicing Community Work,” authors Edwin Kaseke and Perpetua Gumbo examine the background to the land problem in Zimbabwe and, with close reference to the ongoing seizure of white-owned farms, conduct an in-depth discussion on the role of social action in achieving structural and political change. Seeing the farm invasions in the country as an embodiment of social action, they then move on to conceptualizing various strategies in community work before drawing the relevant lessons from which social workers in Zimbabwe could usefully learn. In noting that “...access to land is critical if

the rural people are to improve their standard of living,” the authors conclude that “...there are times when social workers have to mobilize communities to take social action in order to achieve social justice and equity...” but, learning from the farm invasions, “...for social action to succeed, there is need for strong leadership to emerge from within the marginalized groups.”

The third and final section of this issue of *RDS* includes three articles focusing on countries in Asia, i.e., the People’s Republic of China (hereinafter, China), India, and the Philippines. These articles pursue contrasting subject areas but each offers new insight into the problems discussed.

Firstly, the article by Devyani Mani, “Approaching Complementarity? Partners in Poverty Alleviation in Ahmedabad, India and Cebu City, Philippines,” as the title suggests, is a comparative case study between the two cities (each of which has been acclaimed as an example of best practice in participatory poverty alleviation). Her article has the aim of drawing “...relevant lessons in achieving complementarity for more effective management and an increased voice for the poor in policy-making”. According to the author, achieving complementarity, within the context of partnerships for urban poverty alleviation, would mean that each partner “...has a voice and control over its contribution to, and benefits gained from, the partnership...” In the process of forging such partnerships among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), CBOs, and local governments, the author identifies three stages — initiation, consolidation, and complementarity — and establishes that complementarity “...may be reached once projects have been successfully undertaken through partnerships and successful scaling up is underway”. The degree to which the ongoing efforts towards partnership in Ahmedabad and Cebu City are on a successful path is carefully examined, and the factors determining the extent to which complementarities can be achieved are identified. The author maintains that although complementarity has not yet been reached in either Ahmedabad or Cebu City, progress is being made towards achieving it in both.

The second article from Asia takes a look at the process of policy reform within the context of decentralization in the Philippines. Focusing on the financing of the country’s health service provision, Joseph J. Capuno, in his article “Policy Reform under Decentralization: Financing of Health Services in the Philippines” provides a succinct account of the Philippine experience with respect to its decentralization of health services. He contends that this experience “...underscores the importance of ensuring financial adequacy for local governments under decentralization, not only for a more improved and adequate service delivery, but more importantly...to make succeeding policy adjustments easier to implement”. In a particularly detailed discussion on the proposed financing reform measures for the devolved health services, the author observes that a possible way to finance the devolved functions would be to “...increase the internal revenue share of local governments at the expense of the central government”. He notes that there is a “...continuing clamour...” among local governments for a bigger share of total public revenues. He has also tested various approaches to adjusting the internal revenue allotments (IRAs) through simulation exercises and analysis which point to the fiscal consequences of each alternative. He feels that the Philippine experience provides “...useful lessons in the design, consistency, and sequencing of reforms under decentralization”.

The collection of articles comprising this *RDS* issue is rounded off by Victor F. S. Sit who, in a thought-provoking contribution, discusses the ongoing economic

integration between Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and neighbouring Guangdong Province and its implications for the further opening of China's economy — specifically within the context of China's pending accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). Focusing on the economic relationship between Hong Kong SAR and Guangdong Province, characterizing the recent partnership as the "front-shop; back factory model," Sit analyses the contribution of processing to China's expanding economy. He argues that once China is a full-fledged member of the WTO, new circumstances will exist for further shaping the economic integration of Hong Kong SAR and Guangdong Province, and further defining Hong Kong SAR's relationship with China and the global economy. Of particular interest is a section listing the potential advantages and pitfalls for the Chinese economy once it achieves full membership of the WTO. Among his conclusions, Sit argues that although within the context of China's economic liberalization, the current role enjoyed by Hong Kong SAR may well decline, the special administrative region's many advantages over other Chinese cities should enable it to become a "Chinese world city". Through being such a "world city," he maintains that "Hong Kong SAR may set standards and examples in trade liberalization for other Chinese cities as well as providing them with a higher-level service platform for further integration with the global economy." He concludes by urging that Hong Kong SAR "...take a hard look at the(se) unfolding realities and chart its future growth path in a more proactive manner".

The articles comprising volume 7 of *RDS* discuss different problems in widely contrasting geographical contexts, but each in its way strives to heighten our understanding of the issues involved and/or derive relevant lessons for further research. It is to be hoped that the foregoing editorial introduction has stimulated readers into a closer examination of the articles herein and that the material is of practical significance and interest to researchers, scholars, and policymakers alike. This is certainly the journal's intention.